

3/6/2023

To the Members of the Finance Committee in response to H.B. 5290 An Act Sunsetting the Highway Use Tax:

I am writing this testimony not only as a mother of 5 children here in CT, but as a member of a small family- multi generational- gasoline business that has vested 50 plus years into our CT community.

A truck highway tax is a fee levied on commercial trucks for their use of public highways. While this tax may generate revenue for the government, there are great negative economic impacts, particularly on citizens and small business owners who rely on gas stations. Some of these impacts will include:

Increased fuel prices- Gas stations will have to bear the cost of the highway tax, which they will likely pass on to consumers in the form of increased fuel prices. This will increase the cost of transportation for citizens and small business owners who rely on trucks for their business.

Reduced demand for fuel: Higher fuel prices may lead to reduced demand for fuel, which could hurt gas station owners who rely on selling fuel as their primary source of revenue. This may also have a ripple effect on other businesses that rely on transportation, such as grocery stores and restaurants.

Increased competition: Higher fuel prices may also lead to increased competition among gas stations, as consumers look for the cheapest fuel prices. This could hurt small business owners who are already operating on tight profit margins.

Reduced economic activity: If the highway tax leads to reduced demand for fuel, it could also lead to reduced economic activity in general, as businesses that rely on transportation may reduce their operations or go out of business entirely.

Overall, a truck highway tax could have significant negative economic impacts on citizens and small business owners who rely on gas stations for fuel. While the tax may generate revenue for the government, it is important to consider the disastrous long term economic consequences and explore other ways to generate revenue that may be less harmful to small businesses and citizens.

According to the Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy, there were approximately 268,550 small businesses in Connecticut in 2020. This number includes businesses across all industries, including gas stations. It needs to be considered and cautioned that again, the state government may benefit from implementing a truck highway tax increase the long term impact upon the states already struggling citizens will be quite devastating as trucking has a foundational economic influence upon our food, distribution, small business owners especially gas station owners like my family, and will only create more of an increase hindrance to companies and people wanting to do any type of business in CT. We will drive out more big companies and corporations that we really cannot afford to loose. We've lost Lego, just recently and the immeasurable amount of small business owners and families really have very little

incentives to stay in CT. If we cannot afford to live here, do business here, how will this states' people survive let alone thrive?

Our great State has lost sight of what benefits its people and the Government seems to be only considering what will benefit them instead of helping the people in which you all represent.

This past week my father found a homeless person trying to live inside the shed at our families gasoline station, this was not only shocking, but also puts small business owners in very difficult situations. The economic crisis we are already in is causing homelessness, increased drug use, and increase criminal violence. My family sees this in our community first hand we even had a customer overdose at our store which is a first time event in 30 plus years. This decline in our communities economically is leading to increased crime and will ultimately destroy our communities. We must start making gains to help preserve our foundational economic driving factors which trucking /hauling/ distribution is perhaps one of the most important to not further negatively impact

Our State Government needs to focus on generating revenue by making CT more friendly to bring more business and people back not the exact opposite which this bill would do . Please help save our States economy and communities and don't drive away more businesses and good citizens.

Please hear our cries from being on the ground in our communities and do not implement an increase highway tax for trucks as proposed in this bill!!

Thank you,

Nicole Milo
Torrington CT